

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

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Stevenson House Offers Grand Reopening Celebration

The historic Stevenson House Grand Reopening Celebration takes place Friday, August 26, and Saturday, August 27, at 530 Houston Street in downtown Monterey. The two-day event is a collaborative effort with California State Parks, Old Monterey Preservation Society, RLS Club of Monterey, and Monterey Public Library.

On August 26, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., a museum reception will be held at the Stevenson House. Activities include readings of Robert Louis Stevenson, music, and light refreshments. A \$5 donation is requested to cover the entertainment and refreshments expenses.

On August 27, all activities are free, beginning with a 10:30 a.m. Stevenson House tour conducted by a State Park Guide. From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the first floor of the Stevenson House will be open for public viewing with a variety of family-oriented educational and interpretive programs scheduled throughout the day. State Park Guides, Volunteers, and Docents will provide the history of the site and the diverse museum collection.

Other August 27 activities: at noon, local artist N. J. Taylor will sign event programs and Stevenson posters in the sala. Her original art, depicting Stevenson's 1879 visit to various locations in and around Monterey, is the current exhibition in the Sala Gallery. At 1 p.m., a librarian from the Monterey Public Library will tell children's stories at the Stevenson House. At 2 p.m., noted Stevenson scholar, Roger Swearingen will talk about "RLS and Other Artistic Visitors to the Stevenson House in the 1870s." This lecture will focus on the Bohemian movement in nineteenth century Monterey that includes Jules Tavernier, Charles Warren Stoddard and Joe Strong. At 3 p.m., regional art historian and CSUMB faculty member Lila Staples will make a visual presentation of "Artists of the Stevenson House." This program will focus on the twentieth century artists who frequented the Stevenson House, including August Gay, Margaret Bruton, Rowena Meeks Abdy and Francis McComas. Tea and shortbread will be served throughout the day.

The Stevenson House, built in the 1840s, was used as a family residence, general store, hotel, and leased premises for carpentry, sign-painting, carriage repair, artists' studios, and as the fabrication studio of Frances Elkins, a leading American interior designer. The Stevenson House has had a rich history of art and local artists. Members of the Monterey Art Community lived, painted, and entertained at the Stevenson House in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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The Stevenson House was given to the State of California in 1941 and was opened as a museum in November 1948. The house collection features some of Robert Louis Stevenson's personal, historical, and literary artifacts of his life from 1850-1894. Not yet famous as the author of *Treasure Island*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Kidnapped*, Stevenson lived in the house from October to early December 1879 when it was known as the French Hotel. Stevenson's personal artifacts in the house come mainly from his stepdaughter who donated them to the State of California expressly for display in the Stevenson House.

For more information about Monterey State Historic Park and the Stevenson House Grand Reopening, please contact California State Parks, 20 Custom House Plaza, Monterey, CA 93940, or call (831) 649-2905.

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